**UQ Winter Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | **Implementation of the Comprehensive, High-dose Aphasia Treatment (CHAT) program** |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | This project will be conducted with the Queensland Aphasia Research Centre (QARC) at the Surgical, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Service (STARS). It will run for 4 weeks, with approximately 36 hours of engagement per week.Please note: This project can be completed under a remote working arrangement, however partial on-site attendance within the first week is preferable to support orientation and upskilling in the particulars of the project. Regular contact with the project’s supervisor can be organised through videoconferencing. |
| **Description:** | Aphasia is a language disability that occurs in approximately 30% of stroke patients. There is high quality evidence that aphasia therapy improves communication outcomes and individuals benefit more when aphasia therapy is provided in a higher dose. However, major evidence-practice gaps in aphasia have been identified by our team and include the inadequate amount and intensity of therapy received, the lack of collaborative goal setting, and a lack of conversation partner training. To address these gaps, we have developed and trialled an effective, comprehensive, high-dose treatment program, called CHAT (Comprehensive High-dose Aphasia Treatment). CHAT incorporates evidence-based and goal-directed treatment of impairment and function, involves and trains informal caregivers, and provides a novel hybrid of face-to-face and telerehabilitation to ensure equity of access irrespective of location.This project aims to implement the CHAT program into clinical rehabilitation settings. Specifically, it aims to investigate: 1) the implementation of the CHAT program; 2) effectiveness and cost effectiveness of CHAT compared to usual care; and 3) whether implementing CHAT results in increased knowledge and skills of speech pathologists in delivering comprehensive, high-dose aphasia treatments.To achieve these aims, this project will be conducted in two phases: 1) usual care, where current speech pathologist practice relating to aphasia rehabilitation will be monitored (years 1-2); and 2) implementation of the CHAT program (years 3-4). Running concurrently to phase 1 and in preparation for phase 2, a preparatory phase will be conducted to inform the implementation strategy for program scale-up.Your involvement in this research project will relate primarily to the CHAT implementation and preparatory phases of this research project. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | Activities completed as part of this project include:* Assisting in conducting a literature review and synthesis to identify current evidence-based practices for aphasia. This information will be used to inform the content of training and recommended therapy as part of the CHAT program. This may include:
	+ Conducting a literature search to identify current evidence
	+ Critically appraising and assessing the relevance of research literature
	+ Synthesising research literature to form recommendations for different treatment approaches
* Support the development of clinician training resources for the delivery of the CHAT program.
	+ Collaborate with researchers to brainstorm and make decisions about training materials
	+ Engage with clinicians to obtain input on the design and content of training materials
	+ Support the development of therapy how-to guides, therapy templates, online training resources, and/or other training materials.
	+ Collate treatment video recordings to incorporate into training

Depending on the interests and level of experience of the student, there may also be opportunities to support data collection and management for the Usual Care phase of this trial.You will gain skills in:* Critical appraisal and synthesis of research literature.
* Collaboration with stakeholders involved in the project.
* How to deliver different evidence-based aphasia therapy approaches, acquired through gaining knowledge and the development of training resources.
* Training design and development.
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| **Suitable for:** | Ideally, the successful applicant will have some level of experience in aphasia, e.g., has completed the adult language lecture series and/or a relevant student placement. However, this is not a requirement, and we encourage applications from all students.  |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Marie McSween, post-doctoral research fellowWith support from Rachel Levine, PhD Candidate |
| **Further info:** | For any further information, please contact:Dr Marie McSween via email: m.mcsween@uq.edu.au Rachel Levine: r.levine@uq.edu.au  |